

TESTIMONY OF
DALE M. HERDER, Ph.D.
BEFORE THE
HOUSE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
MAY 9, 2006

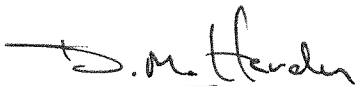
English should be the official language of the State of Michigan, either through legislation or constitutional amendment.

I have spent the majority of the past forty years as a public school teacher and administrator. As a former high school principal (Laingsburg High School) and academic vice president and English professor (Lansing Community College—over 20,000 students), I have observed at close range what happens to people who cannot speak, read, or write English well. They often fail in one undertaking after another, and their hope dwindles as their career and family plans are dashed. Too often they become jobless and part of the social underclass that needs public assistance or spends years in prison.

Worse still, many immigrants to Michigan cannot write or read their native language OR English, so they are cursed by being illiterate in two languages. They have few job hopes here, and they have no job hopes in their native countries. They take and take and take, and they are unable to give back to our society, even though many of them fervently desire to do so.

English is the lingua franca of the world, and we will be prudent to state as much here in Michigan. Twenty-six other states have enacted laws making English their official language, and it is time that we do the same. Let us tell the truth about our language and its ability to unify and empower people.

American culture and our future survival as a nation will best be served by our decisive action now—action that ensures the primacy of English in the State of Michigan.



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